



February 27, 2012

Dear Sen. Lebeau, Rep. Berger, Sen. Frantz, Rep. Camillo and members of the Commerce Committee,

Officers

Gabriel DaSilva
President

Helen Rosenberg
Vice President

Gerald Whitaker
Treasurer

Kathleen Krolak
Secretary

Directors

Lisa Brandes

Eric Epstein

Metinda Papowicz

Robert Pellegrino

Mike Storz

Peter Troiano

Staff

Chris Heitmann,
Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to address HB 5040, *An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Traffic Calming and Economic Development in Westville Village*. As leaders of the Westville Village Renaissance Alliance (WVRA), a non-profit organization dedicated to the economic, physical and cultural revitalization of Westville Village, we are writing to offer our unequivocal support for this bill.

As a designated Connecticut Main Street program, WVRA is tasked with strategically managing and enhancing the historic, mixed-use district known to locals as the "The Village". Our place-based, comprehensive approach to creating a more vibrant neighborhood "downtown" integrates activities in three areas:

- **Economic Development** – retaining, growing and attracting businesses and jobs to the district;
- **Marketing & Promotions** – promoting businesses, events and cultural offerings, including as our annual ArtWalk festival, a weekly farmers market;
- **Placemaking & Design** – enhancing the district's physical appeal and functioning, including historic preservation and traffic-calming efforts.

HB 5040 would support our efforts in all three of these areas and have a major positive impact on the Village's growth.

Westville Village functions, like many of our state's smaller towns' downtowns, as both a local and regional destination. Also similar to many of these towns, a state "highway" serves as our Main Street – three state roads, to be precise, in our case: Whalley Ave. (Rt.63), Fountain Street (Rt. 243), and Fitch Street (Rt. 10).

As such, and as a major gateway into New Haven, Westville Village has a high amount of traffic, upwards of 30,000 cars/day in one section. While local businesses do benefit from the high visibility this traffic affords, *the roads as currently configured prioritize speeding through the Village as quickly as possible*. This is to the detriment of both motorist and pedestrian safety, and to the foot traffic and easy access to parking that many successful downtown business districts, ours included, so crucially rely upon. Village businesses and property owners have identified these concerns (in addition to the lack of pedestrian-scaled lighting in the district) as primary obstacles to business growth and to finding suitable tenants for vacant properties.

The proposed legislation would help us directly address these concerns and furthermore support the goals of two key strategic and conceptual planning documents for the Village, most notably CT Main Street Center's *An Action Plan for the Revitalization of Westville Village* (2009) and SCRCOG's *Whalley Avenue Corridor Study* (2010):

- **Reduce motorist collisions through the Village via traffic-calming measures** – one two-block stretch in the heart of the Village saw 68 vehicular collisions from 2006-2008, due mainly to a high-speed merge and red-light running between Fountain Street and West Rock Avenue;
- **Enable current traffic volumes, but at slower, safer, speeds** to encourage local shopping and other activities and to improve the attractiveness of the Village as a place to locate and/or grow a business and local jobs;
- **Improve pedestrian safety for residents and visitors**, including the growing numbers of young families, seniors, college students (from SCSU, UNH, and Yale) and developmentally disabled adults (from Chapel Haven, Inc.) who live and/or spend time in the Village;
- **Improve the perception and function of curbside parking**, currently configured (though not enforced) as through lanes during rush hours, scaring potential customers away during key shopping hours and throughout the day;
- **Foster further development of the Village as a destination for the visual and performing arts**, building on the existing cluster of resident artists, galleries, and performance spaces. Pedestrian connectivity between places, e.g. between a gallery or theatre and a restaurant or public park, is key to growing this crucial sector, in turn attracting new residents and creative businesses.
- **Knit together physically, socially and economically the two sides of Whalley Avenue** – one of the highest-income census tracts in the city on one side, one of the lowest on the other. Over time, higher traffic speeds and longer pedestrian crossing times and distances have literally widened the gap between these two parts of our community. Numerous studies show that slower, narrower streets have higher rates of social capital, increasingly seen as equally, if not more, important as financial capital to thrive in today's economy.

On behalf of our business, property owner, residential, and institutional members, I encourage you to approve HB 5040. WVRA commits to working closely with our members, City of New Haven staff and other key stakeholders to ensure these funds are well-spent and see a substantial return on investment in the form of increased motorist and pedestrian safety and overall business and job growth in Westville Village.

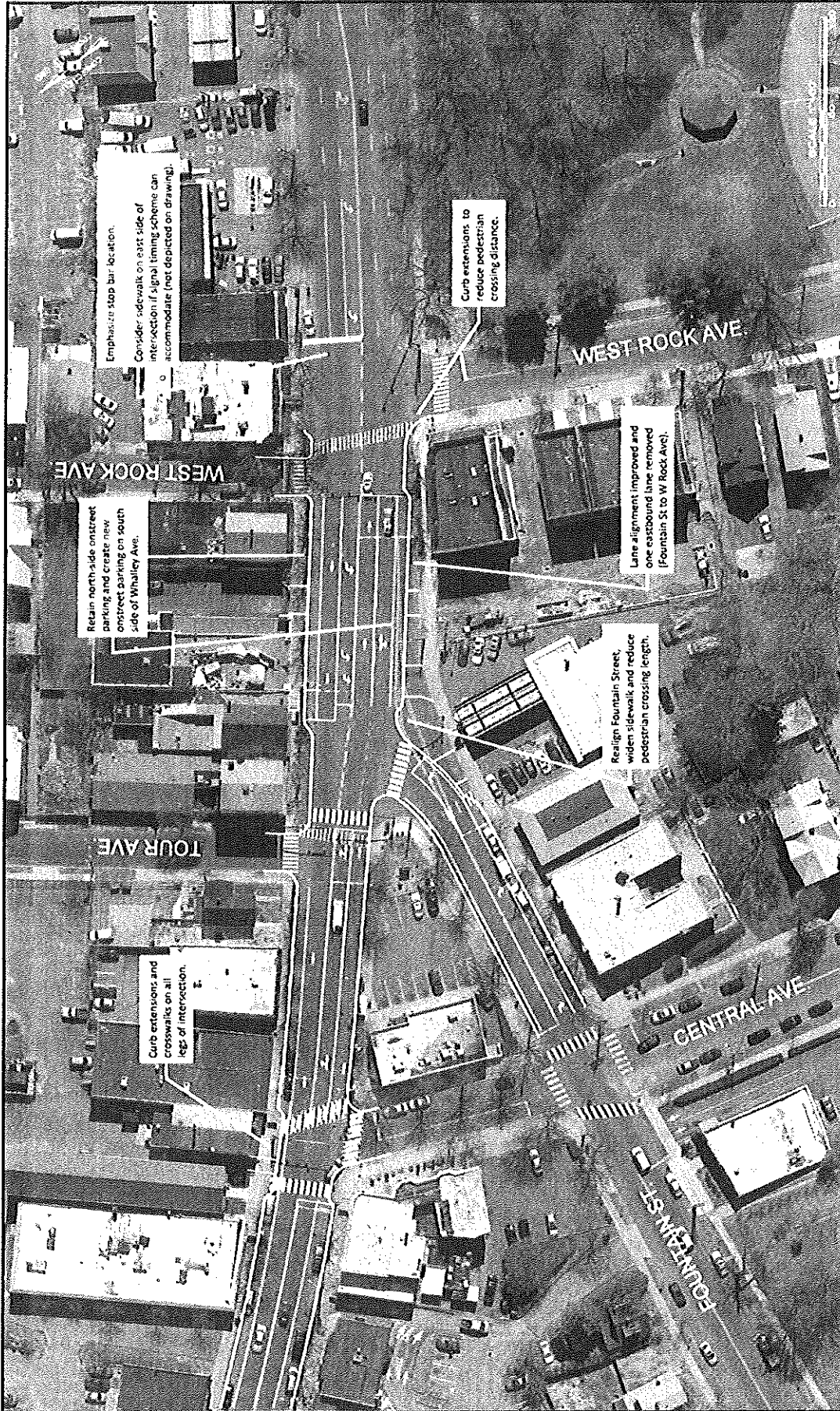
Thank you for your consideration,



Chris Heitmann
Executive Director



Gabriel DaSilva
President



CITY OF NEW HAVEN
WHALLEY AVENUE
CORRIDOR STUDY

EXHIBIT 3-7
Central Ave to W Rock Ave (segments W3 & W4)



Connecticut Livable Streets Campaign

February 27, 2012

Steering Committee

Ikunbo Aandajage, West River N'hood
Services Corporation (New Haven)

Mark Abraham, Coordinator, New
Haven Safe Streets Coalition (New
Haven)

Kristen Bechtel MD, Section of Pediatric
Emergency Medicine, Injury Free
Coalition for Kids, Yale New Haven
Hospital

Justin Ecker, Co-Leader, Friends of
East Rock Park (New Haven), Ward 10
Alderman, City of New Haven

Tom Harned, Elm City Cycling

Doug Hausladen, Downtown Wooster
Square Community Management Team,
Ward 7 Alderman, City of New Haven

Chris Heilmann, Executive Director,
Westville Village Renaissance Alliance
(New Haven)

Ryan Lynch, Senior Planner, Tri-State
Transportation Campaign

Rob Roche, Elm City Cycling

Abigail Roth, Downtown Wooster
Square Community Management Team

Brian Tang, Elm City Cycling

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

HB 5040 – AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR TRAFFIC CALMING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WESTVILLE VILLAGE

Dear Senator Lebeau, Rep. Berger, Sen. Frantz, Rep. Camillo and
members of the Commerce Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to
support HB 5040 "An Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Traffic Calm-
ing and Economic Development in Westville Village".

New Haven is the regional center of south central Connecticut and the
intermodal center of Connecticut's transportation system. In addition, a
greater proportion of New Haven residents (14%) walk to work than in
any other city in New England while another 31% of city residents bike,
carpool or take public transit to work.

Tragedies at the Yale Medical School, along Whalley Avenue, and on
Long Wharf Drive, as well as numerous other terrible accidents, galva-
nized the community to form the New Haven Safe Streets Coalition. To
date, over 2,000 people have signed the Coalitions Petition in support
of safer streets. As result of the efforts of the coalition, in October 2008
the New Haven Board of Aldermen passed Complete Streets legislation
that led to the completion and publication of the 2010 Complete Streets
Manual, that "promotes a safe, context-sensitive transportation network
that serves all users and integrates the planning and design of complete
streets that foster a livable, sustainable and economically vibrant com-
munity."

Despite attempts of the Safe Streets Coalition and The Coalition for a
Livable Whalley to engage the state in a thoughtful conversation around
ideas generated to from the community to make "Whalley Avenue safer,
calmer and more vibrant." Public concerns were not addressed during
the recent widening of Whalley Avenue through Westville. What was
once a two lane road was widened into a 4-lane road with no pedestrian
medians, raised intersections or other traffic safety measures.

I urge you to support the authorization of bonds for traffic calming in
Westville village to help increase safety along Whalley Avenue in West-
ville.

Sincerely,

Mark Abraham on behalf of Steering Committee Members
CT Livable Streets Campaign



882 WHALLEY AVE NEW HAVEN, CT. 06515

February 28, 2012

Committee on Commerce

To Whom It May Concern:

Because of a death in the family, I am not able to attend this Committee hearing in person. I am hopeful, though that HB 5040 will be approved as it is an important piece of the puzzle in the continued growth of Westville Village. I encourage you to support it.

I started Delaney's Restaurant & Tap Room 11yrs ago, and it has grown since then from 12 to 49 employees. Westville Village has improved all along those 11 years. I am currently engaged in negotiations to open a second business that would initially employ 25 people. This bill will help in the continued growth and safety of an important part of our local economy and local quality of life.

Whalley Avenue/Rt. 63 is a major thoroughfare connecting the Merritt/Wilbur Cross with Downtown New Haven. I believe with the funding in this proposed bill that this section of Whalley Avenue can be made safer for both motorists and pedestrians and help to create clearly defined lanes and parking to the benefit of people driving through and the people who stop, shop, own businesses, and live in this community.

What would seem to be potential minor changes to the streetscape could truly have a tremendous impact. At the moment, most of the Village's intersections have inadequate and incomplete crosswalks, creating confusion and leading many people to jaywalk. Additionally, there are no defined parking spaces, which creates further confusion among people trying to park and shop or eat. I am asked all the time, "Is that a legal space?" People are issued tickets in what is perceived as a legal space, but at the discretion of the Officer may or may not be. This creates animosity towards the police and the City.

With clearly marked spaces, an empty curbside will not be perceived as a second travel lane. This happens often, given that Whalley Avenue is two lanes on either side coming into Westville, going down to one lane in the heart of the Village. If people perceive that parking is a hassle and walking is a hassle, well maybe they just won't go to Westville.

This is an increasingly vibrant community and an integral part of the City and State and the betterments HB 5040 will enable will benefit everyone who has to drive through or visit our community, as well as business owners like myself.

Sincerely,

Peter Gremse

Peter A. Gremse
Managing Member
CT Tax Reg. # 9961160-000



February 27, 2012

RE: Support for Committee Bill No. 5040

Dear Committee on Commerce Representatives:

I write to you today in support of Committee Bill No. 5040, an Act Authorizing Bonds of the State for Traffic Calming and Economic Development in Westville Village. As a successful public relations firm owner living and working in Westville, I feel this bill would have a positive impact on business development in Westville Village. Additional funds for traffic calming in Westville Village will serve to enhance a safer more walkable environment and support the growth of neighborhood businesses and a solid community.

Although a section within New Haven, Westville is unique and blessed to have its own "downtown" and thriving business district and its own business organization, Westville Village Renaissance Alliance. This organization serves as catalyst for economic development in Westville and is a model for how a well defined neighborhood within a larger metro environment can serve to enhance the quality of life in New Haven and beyond.

I hope the committee will support this bill that will ultimately develop business and improve life in Westville.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Natalie Judd". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Natalie Judd
Principal

February 27, 2012

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Bennett Graff, and I am a resident of 352 West Rock Avenue, a residential home that stands approximately 100 to 200 yards south of Westville Village. On my corner of West Rock Avenue are a series of well-trafficked businesses and directly across the street from my home is the Edgewood Park Farmer's Market held every Sunday (or every other Sunday during the winter).

This statement is in support of the HB5040 bond issue to provide the necessary amenities to create a safe traffic route in Westville Village, particularly the one block stretch along West Rock Avenue between Whalley Avenue and Yale Avenue/Willard Street. This two-lane road abuts one of the most heavily used parts of Edgewood Park. Tennis courts and a basketball court, as well as the park area indoor use area of Coogan Pavilion and the adjoining skate part are all accessed through the parking entrance on West Rock Avenue. This is, as a result, a street down which many children travel or cross in order to access these amenities. It also a road on which vehicles commonly speed--both up and down the street, which features a 25-foot drop in height from Yale Avenue at the southern end to the Whalley Avenue at the north end--to beat the traffic light at the Whalley Avenue end or to climb rapidly the hill to reach the Yale Avenue end.

In either case, vehicles drive unusually fast, often in clear violation of local speed limits. At present the road features no posted speed limit, slow down, or child crossing signs (especially by the park entrance). It also does not permit street parking on the eastern edge of West Rock Avenue, toward Whalley Avenue (after the park entrance), encouraging vehicles to speed that part of the straightaway to reach a light that does not permit a right turn on red anyway. There are no speed bumps, humps, or other traffic-calming measures.

In brief, this street needs any number of fix-ups to curtail excessive speeding: additional parking at the Whalley Avenue corner end (preferably with painted-in area spots), potentially beefed-up corners (rounded outwards to create a buffer), signage, and so forth.

These are critical safety measures that the bond issue would support to significantly improve the safety of our neighborhood.

Thank you,

Bennett Graff
352 West Rock Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
203-387-2683

February 27, 2012

Dear Representatives,

As a resident in the Westville neighborhood, I am writing to encourage the passage of Committee Bill 5040 for the reasons of traffic control, safety, and economic development.

For me, traffic calming ranks highest of my concerns and underlies the issues of safety and economic development. My family tries to shop in the stores and eat at restaurants in the Westville Village but the simple act of crossing the street is a real challenge. I am particularly concerned with the safety of our 5-year old son. The traffic speeds by with little caution at the intersections! While I would like to support our local businesses, we generally end up driving to another part of town because it is simply too unnerving to deal with the traffic.

Further, with comparatively little investment, there is much that can be done to improve the look and feel of the Westville Village corridor. With the promise of traffic calming and other safety measures such as lighting and crosswalks, the area would become a destination rather than a pass-through. The economic development that would follow would surely deliver growth that exceeds the investment.

The renewal of our Village that this bill represents for our small community is sure to be received with great gratitude from all of us residents. This strategic investment is a welcome symbol of what smart government can do to encourage growth.

With sincere regards, Melinda

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Papowitz', with a stylized, flowing script.

Melinda Papowitz
192 Willard Street
New Haven, CT
06515
Ph: 203-668-0914